



Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

President's Message



Musings, Updates, and More from Club President - Judith Birx

Fellow members of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds,
Our next meeting will be held on July 14th 2021 at 7:00pm. The meeting will be held with the new CDC and State Guide lines. The wearing of masks is now **optional**.

We ask that you follow the guidelines;

- If you are vaccinated, you do not have to wear a mask.
- If you are not vaccinated, you should be wearing a mask to protect yourself. Keep in mind that the vaccine is only 90% effective. You still have a chance of contracting the virus. With all this information, you are still responsible for making choices that could affect your life.

As always :

- If you attend our meetings, you are attending at your own risk and are now aware that masks are not required to attend.
- If you are not feeling well , please do not attend.
- If you are in the high risk category please consider staying home.
- If you are not vaccinated, please wear your mask (we love you and want everyone to stay well).
- We are not requiring you show us your vaccination card at this time.

I will not be at the meeting this month as I will be out of the state, but our VP Mark Moore will be running the meeting in my place.

I will show you all of my beautiful Arkansas Crystals in August!
Have a great meeting and be nice to Mark!

July's meeting will have a Show and Tell, so bring your stuff to show...and tell!

This Month's Roundup of Stories

- President's Message
- Secretary's Report
- Botswana Diamond
- Winchcome Meteorite
- Dinos In The Arctic
- Bench Tips

We will be setting up the polishing machines at our next meeting. There will be members ready to assist you with instructions and rules you must follow before, during, and after the the use of these machines.

We also have a small trim saw as well.

**YOU MUST COME EARLY TO USE THE MACHINES!
SOMEONE WILL BE THERE AT 5:30PM TO START THE SET UP!**

We will be having our 50/50 at the next meeting and I do want to express that the 50/50 is a way for our club to increase club funds as well as yours! So, be sure to play!!

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me, Judith Birx, at 352-587-1702.

I want to thank you for your support!

President Judith Birx

Secretary's Report

Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting

Date 6/9/2021

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at pm.

We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent prayer.

Mark Moore made a motion to accept the minutes of our meeting as printed in the newsletter, Ralph Barber seconded. Passed by all members.

Treasurer Janet Wheeler gave the Treasurer's report. Bear Valonis made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report subject to audit. Seconded by Mark Moore.

Approved by all.

There was 1 new member to recognize; Barbara Mincey
There were 3 guests in attendance; Janice Pokorski, Alice & Laura Trautman.

President Birx stated that our next meeting will be on July 14th at 7pm and will be held inside unless things change due to the current pandemic situation.

She also announced procedures for upcoming meetings.

We will continue to follow CDC Guidelines;

- Masks are now optional if you are vaccinated.
- You do not need to show your vaccination card when entering the building.
- Use of hand sanitizer is recommended.
- Practice Social Distancing.
- The Senior Center will be sanitized before the meeting.
- Gloves are recommended when handling money.

The State is not requiring you to show your vaccine card.

We are not in a state of emergency.

Please be aware, if you are not vaccinated and choose not to wear a mask, you could subject yourself or others to the Corona Virus.

If you are sick, or in contact with someone who has tested positive for the Corona Virus, please leave.

If you are in the high risk category, please consider not coming.

You are attending meetings and all activities associated with the Withlacoochee Rockhounds at your own risk.

If you have not already done so, you will be required to sign a waiver before entering the building.

The Monthly Jewelry Class is scheduled for July 6th, 9am – 12pm. The class will be on chain making. The class is free and supplies will be provided.

New Business

Tonight's program will be Janice Wojcik's presentation on Honeymoon Island.

Next meeting we will be having Show & Tell. You can bring all your goodies and show them off! I will be bringing some of my rocks from Arkansas. Lauren and Lynn will have pieces from their trip and I'm sure you all have rocks, minerals and fossils to show off.

Melodye Steverson is planning her Beginner Cabochon class and would like to know who is interested. Please come sign up at the front table and let her know if you prefer day or night classes. The Beginner class is free for members. She will also have Cab 2 classes which will teach more advanced techniques, later in the summer.

Dave Letasi made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Janet Wheeler seconded, passed by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

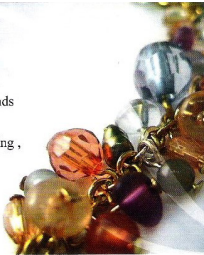
Minutes respectfully submitted by Michael Steverson.

Rockhounds Advertisers

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Member of Withlacoochee Rockhounds
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352-587-1702



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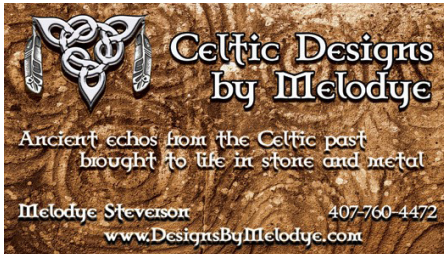
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KELLY JOHNSON

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... Yes I buy collections, lapidary equipment, etc...

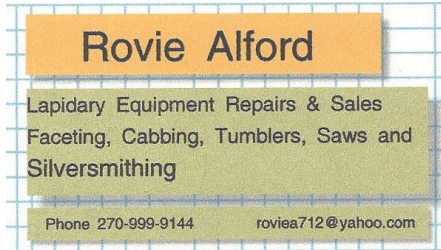
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Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.

Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and
the club website. It will benefit both
your business and our club.

If you ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.

The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.

Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.

Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com or
send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Botswana diamond could be world's third largest

Now That's A Big Rock!!!

The stone - weighing 1,098 carats - was shown to President Mokgweetsi Masisi, two weeks after the diamond firm, Debswana, unearthed it.

The huge gem is only slightly less heavy than the world's second-largest diamond which was also found in Botswana in 2015.

Botswana is Africa's largest producer of diamonds.

"This is the largest diamond to be recovered by Debswana in its history of over 50 years in operation," said Lynette Armstrong, Debswana Diamond Company's acting managing director.

"From our preliminary analysis it could be the world's third largest gem quality stone."

Debswana is a joint venture between the government and global diamond giant De Beers and up to 80% of the income from sales goes to state coffers through dividends, royalties and taxes.

Totswana's Minerals Minister, Lefoko Moagi, said the latest find could not have come at a better time for Botswana after the pandemic caused diamond sales to slump last year.

The newly discovered stone, which was found at the Jwaneng mine, is yet to be named.

This is an excerpted portion of the article.

Read the entire article here at [BBC.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57111111)

A diamond believed to be the third largest ever found has been put on display in Botswana



Winchcombe meteorite gets official classification

Landed in a driveway in the UK!

The rocky material that fell to Earth in a blazing fireball over the Cotswold town of Winchcombe in February has had its classification formally accepted.

Details have just been published by the international Meteoritical Society in its bulletin database. Early work by UK scientists indicates the object dates back to the very beginning of the Solar System, some 4.6 billion years ago.

This makes it extremely valuable. Certainly, it is the most important space rock ever to fall and be recovered in Britain.

Formal classification basically means the dark grey-to-black material picked up in Gloucestershire earlier this year is now absolutely recognised as being meteoritic in nature, and it means also that the name "Winchcombe" can be used to describe it.

"Carbonaceous chondrites are probably the oldest and most primitive extra-terrestrial materials we have available to study," said the NHM's Dr Ashley King.

"They come from asteroids that formed right back at the start of our Solar System.

This is an excerpted portion of the article.

Read the entire article here at [BBC.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-56484444)

*They're like time capsules.
They're telling us about
the building blocks of our
Solar System.*



Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form 2021

Annual Dues: New individual member, \$25.00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00. No charge for paid 2020 members who are renewing for 2021. Returning members from 2019, \$20.00 (\$5.00 discount) for 2021 membership

☐

Check if returning member

☐

Check if current member
with change of information

☐

Check if new member

☐

Check if under 18

Please Print Clearly

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Street Address:

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State

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Phone Number (s)

Email address:

You may now fill in the fields on this form if you are viewing it on your computer or tablet.
Each field may be clicked on and then you may type in your information.
You will still need to print out the form, but your added information should show on the

Give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634**

Renewing 2020 members : No charge for 2021 membership. Please fill out form and give it to club secretary Janet Wheeler or send it to the above address.

2021

Fossil find adds to evidence of dinosaurs living in Arctic year-round

Fossils, Fossils, Fossils!

Fossils from tiny baby dinosaurs discovered in northernmost Alaska offer strong evidence that the prehistoric creatures lived year-round in the Arctic and were likely warm-blooded, according to a study published on Thursday in the journal *Current Biology*. The fossils are from at least seven types of dinosaurs just hatched or still in their eggs about 70 million years ago. Researchers have never found evidence of dinosaur nests so far north, said lead author Pat Druckenmiller, director of the University of Alaska Museum of the North.

"If they reproduced, then they overwintered there. If they overwintered there, they had to deal with conditions that we don't usually associate with dinosaurs, like freezing conditions and snow," Druckenmiller said.

To survive dark Arctic winters, those dinosaurs could not have basked in the sun to warm their bodies, as lizards do, he said.

This is an excerpted portion of the article.

Read the entire article here at JerusalemPost.com

The find helps upend past assumptions of dinosaurs as giant cold-blooded reptiles.



Dig Day at Graves Mountain (Part 1)

An article from our good friends at Rock and Gem magazine.

The sights and sounds of rockhounds on the hunt at Graves Mountain are music to the senses, as you learn more about this site, which Smithsonian Magazine includes on its list "Five of the Best Places to Go Gem Hunting."

Caretaker of the mine, Clarence Norman, Jr (Junior), does offer public digging at the site by appointment. In addition, in April and October, he and his wife, Melissa, host Rock Swap & Dig events.

The site is owned by Asea Brown Boveri (ABB), a Swiss-Swedish multinational conglomerate based in Zurich. For more information, contact Norman at 706-359-1544.

This is an excerpt from the article. The full article, including a video is available here.

[Rock and Gem Magazine](#)



Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club, 3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

**Your Business Card Size Ad
in Rock Talk**

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Advertisers Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website. The club can use the monthly income. Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
or send to: Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34811-6634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$25.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

2021 Club Officers and Appointees

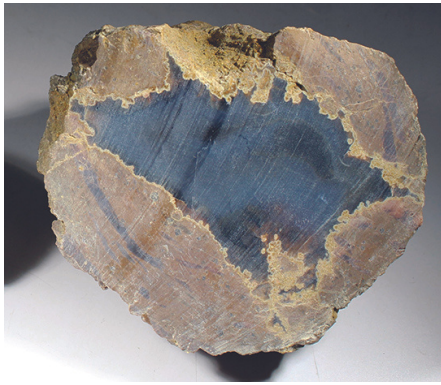
President	Judith Birx	352.587.1702	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President	Mark Moore	352.586.9607	markles2021@gmail.com
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Gem Bag Coordinator	Gloria DuPont	352.848.5199	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Judith Birx (President)	Mark Moore (Vice President)	Melodye Steverson (Secretary)	Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)
Roberta Oldread (2020)	Lynn Walters (2021)	Ginny Steverson (2021)	Michael Steverson (2021 appointed) Ralph Barber (Past President)

Proven Tips for Sanding and Polishing Thundereggs

Another fine article from our friends at Rock and Gem Magazine



Two basic lapidary machines can be used to sand and polish thunderegg halves quickly. Both involve sanding the pieces dry.

Safety First: Because these machines create a lot of silica dust, suitable respiratory protection must be worn. Different types of respirators are available, and you must follow the instructions for each type to determine the level of protection you require.

One machine is the Richardson's Ranch high-speed sander. It is an inverted sanding disk utilizing a seven-inch diameter wheel with silicon carbide sanding disks.

When using this sander, you hold the stone up on to the rapidly spinning disk and move it about to sand off the saw cutting marks and any scratches present. I don't often use this machine because my arms tire from holding the rock against the wheel, which also tends to leave circular sanding marks on the thunderegg.

This is an excerpt of the whole article, which can be view here.

[Rock and Gem Magazine](#)



Help Save William Holland School

For those of you that have not heard, the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts, aka William Holland Retreat, has decided to cancel their entire 2021 season due to the pandemic.

They plan to re-open for the 2022 season.

This school has meant a lot to many of our members over the years and now they are struggling to maintain their building and grounds without their normal revenue stream from students. If you're interested in helping, they have an auction every Tuesday and a sale on Wednesday. You can get slabs, cabochons, findings, tools, books and completed jewelry as well. These are on their Facebook pages. Just look up William Holland School on Facebook and I'm sure you can find them. They also offer videos of their teachers doing demos and classes, so you can learn from the site as well!

You can help the school and get great stuff at a good price at the same time. Check it out!



Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

FANCY RIVET HEADS

For a nice looking rivet head, use brass escutcheon pins. You'll have perfectly rounded heads that are all the same size and shape. The pins are a little hard to find, so try the best hardware stores first. Be sure to get solid brass pins, not brass plated steel. If unsure, test them with a magnet.

The pins are readily available online. Lee Valley Tools has them in 16 or 18 gauge and lengths from 1/4 inch to 1 inch. Go to <http://www.LeeValley.com> and do an item search on "escutcheon pin"



For best results, select a drill that gives you a hole with a close fit to the rivet. Trim the rivet to leave a little less than one diameter sticking out the back side. Place the head on a scrap of hard plastic on the anvil so as to not flatten the head. I prefer a ball peen hammer (with a small 3/8 inch ball) for setting the rivet.

EASIER PRONG SETTING

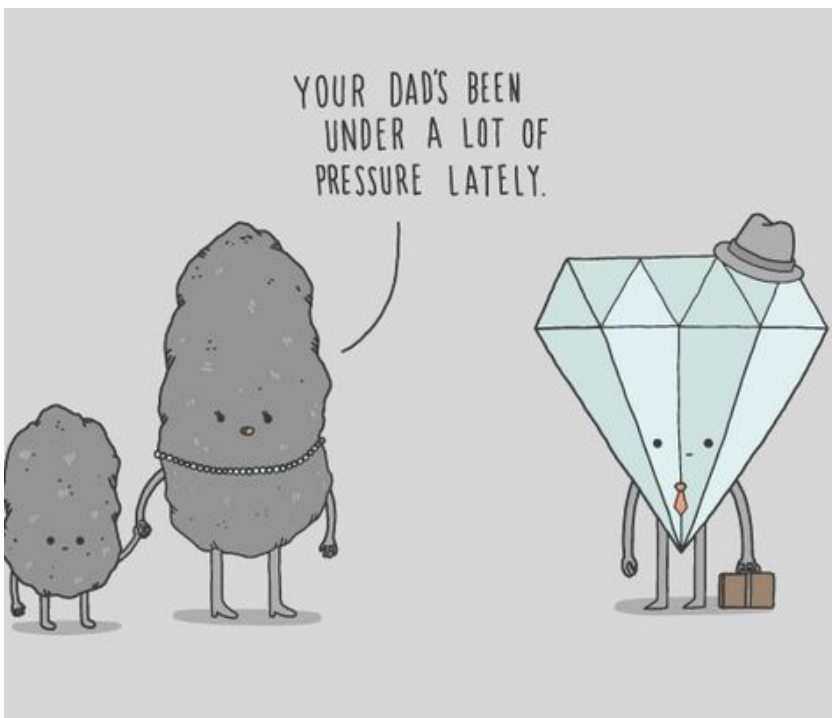
When setting stones in a prong mount, the tool is less likely to slip off the prong if you grind a shallow groove into its face or rough up the face a bit with sandpaper. Some folks prefer a prong pusher for doing this, and others like a set of pliers with a slight groove on one jaw.

The easiest way to create a slot on the pusher is with a file, and the quickest way to create a slot on one jaw of your pliers is with a separating disc. Then do a rough polish on the slot with a medium grit, knife-edge silicone wheel.

Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

Rock Talk Funny Papers





From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you still are not receiving them, please contact me and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address.

As noted in previous issues of Rock Talk, I have created for the club a Google My Business account. Doing this, when someone searches for "lapidary clubs near me", or "rockhounds near me", we will come up in their search. Now that this is live, if you would, please search for "Withlacoochee Rockhounds", and when you see our listing to the right side of the page in Google, please use the "Write a Review" link and give the club a good review. It helps with search engine results. Which means more people find us, and we hopefully acquire new members. It's a win-win!

We have been notified that William Holland has had to cancel their entire 2021 season due to the COVID pandemic. They DO plan to reopen in 2022. William Holland School holds online auctions every Tuesday, and a sale on Wednesdays. Search for their page on Facebook, and please try to buy something from them. It will really help them out.

Our club is being updated and getting better every day, and we now have the new logo we spoke of in previous newsletters. Thank you to Janice Wojcik for the winning design. The new logo can be seen on the Secretary's Report page, and I will be incorporating it into other club documents. In addition, we are researching how soon we can also have patches created with the new logo. With that new logo, I have created new t-shirts, and a tote bag for the club. As with the present shirts, these shirts are available on Amazon. I sent out an e-mail recently with the link to the new merch. You may also find the new shirts on our club website, on the [Club T-Shirts page](#). Get yourself some new club gear to wear!

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for Programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand it's educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.
Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

*During the last several months, illicit requests
have been sent to members of various clubs in the US,
including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members
to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to
various organizations.*

These are SCAMS.

*Be advised that our club has never and will never ask
members to buy gift cards or provide any form of
monetary funds to anyone or any organization by
phone call, email, or any other method of communication.*